

Iowa Department on Aging

Director Donna Harvey

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Machelle Shaffer
Phone: (o) 515/725-3312
(c) 515/745-3442
Email: machelle.shaffer@iowa.gov

Iowa Department on Aging Reminds Older Iowans and Their Families to be Mindful of Safety to Avoid Accidents and Injury

*April 4-10 is National Public Health Week and the Theme for 2011 is
"Safety is No Accident: Live Injury Free"*

(Des Moines, IA) – In conjunction with National Public Health Week and the 2011 theme "Safety is No Accident: Live Injury Free", today Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) Director, Donna Harvey, encouraged Iowans to be mindful of safety hazards and help older Iowans stay healthy and active to live safer in their homes.

According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) analysis, one out of three adults age sixty-five (65) and older falls each year. Falls are the leading cause of injury hospitalizations and emergency room visits in Iowa.

"In Iowa, the CDC statistics show that over *60,000 older Iowans fell within a three-month period of time resulting in over 16,000 injuries," Stated Director Donna Harvey.

As we age, mobility and other health issues can raise the chance of falling and being injured. Tips to help older Iowans maintain their health and independence by decreasing chances of injury by a fall include:

- Exercising regularly to help increase leg strength and balance.
- Have a doctor or pharmacist review medications (prescription and over-the-counter) to reduce side effects of dizziness or drowsiness.
- Regularly visit an eye doctor and get the right prescription lens needed for clear vision
- Use ramps instead of steps
- Remove throw rugs or tape them down securely with carpet tape
- Install hand rails in bathrooms along with a hand-held shower and shower chair
- Improve lighting in the home by adding more light sources as needed, including lamps and night lights
- Move cords on lamps and electrical appliances towards the walls and away from traffic areas
- Keep shoes, magazines, children and pet toys where they cannot be tripped on

One important program that can help older Iowans maintain their strength and balance is a program titled **Matter of Balance**. This workshop is designed to help older Iowans build strength and increase their balance. **Matter of Balance** workshops are offered in several areas of the state. To find out if there is a workshop near you, check out the website: http://www.aging.iowa.gov/Documents/IHL/MOB_Workshops_by_Date_3.7.11.pdf .

For more information on the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) go to: <http://www.aging.iowa.gov/> . To find out local resources for older adults and people with disabilities, visit: <http://www.lifelonglinks.org/> .

The mission of the Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) is to provide advocacy, educational, and prevention services to help Iowans remain independent as they age. IDA administers over 32 million dollars in services and supports through a network of 13 Area Agencies on Aging across the state.

*According to CDC analysis of a 2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey.

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